

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-11 ISO-00 NEAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SSO-00

INRE-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 OMB-01 OC-05 CCO-00 SY-05

OPR-02 A-01 SCCT-01 SAM-01 SCS-03 SCA-01 ACDA-05 /099 W

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O P 221422Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8276

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY

AMCONSUL ADANA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY

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FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA PRIORITY
DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 0713

MOSCOW FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY FOR DAY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, PFOR, LE
SUBJECT: SYRIAN MEDIATION EFFORTS CONTINUE TO ACCOMPANIMENT OF
UNDIMINISHED CLASHES

REF: BEIRUT 0677 (1305Z)

1. SUMMARY: SYRIAN MEDIATION TEAM HEADED BY FONMIN
KHADDAM CONTINUED CONTACTS AND CONSULTATIONS WITH
LEBANESE FACTIONS. RADIO LEBANON ANNOUNCED AT
1045
HOURS JAN 22 FORMATION OF SYRIAN/LEBANESE/PALESTINIAN
COMMISSION TO PLAN AND IMPLEMENT OVERALL SETTLEMENT
WHICH WILL INCLUDE CEASEFIRE AT YET-TO-BE ANNOUNCED TIME.
THIS ANNOUNCEMENT SUGGESTS THAT HARD BARGAINING ON NITTY-
GRITTY ISSUES MAY HAVE ACHIEVED SOME SORT OF BREAK-
THROUGH, BUT THERE IS MUCH HAGGLING TO BE DONE. AT LEAST,
HOWEVER, THERE IS NOW SOME BASIS FOR HOPE THAT INVOLVED
MIDDLE EAST RUG BARGAINING WILL PRODUCE AGREEMENT BEFORE
THE RUG IS PULLED FROM UNDER THE PARTICIPANTS. IMMENSITY
OF CHRISTIAN REVERSES OUTSIDE CENTRAL BEIRUT FINALLY BECOMING
PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTOR IN STATE OF PLAY. MEANWHILE, FIGHTING
CONTINUES AT NEAR-NORMAL LEVELS ON MOST USUAL FRONTS IN
BEIRUT AND THE REST OF THE COUNTRY. FOOD AND POL SHOR-
TAGES ARE BECOMING ACUTE IN BEIRUT AREA. END SUMMARY.

2. ANNOUNCEMENT BY BEIRUT RADIO AT 1045 HOURS JAN 22 OF
STATEMENT FROM LEBANESE PRESIDENCY PROVIDED FIRST CONCRETE
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INDICATION THAT ACTIVITIES OF SYRIAN MEDIATION TEAM MAY PRODUCE
VIALE ACCORD AMONG FIGHTING FACTIONS. ACCORDING THE TEXT OF
ANNOUNCEMENT, "A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT" HAS BEEN REACHED AS
REESULT OF SYRIAN CONTACTS WHICH INCLUDES FOLLOWING THREE
POINTS: "FIRST, FORMATION OF HIGHER LEBANESE/SYRIAN/
PALESTINIAN COMMITTEE TO SUPERVISE CEASEFIRE AND ITS IMPLE-
MENTATION. SECOND, SUB-COMMITTEES SHOULD BE FORMED TO
OBSERVE AND SUPERVISE IMPLEMENTATION OF CEASEFIRE IN THE

DIFFERENT DISTRICTS OF THE FIGHTING. THIRD, HIGHER COMMITTEE WILL ANNOUNCE TIME OF CEAASEFIRE AND THE MEANS AND WAYS OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION." ALTHOUGH EFFICACY OF AGREEMENT ON GROUND HAS YET TO BE TESTED IN PRACTICE, IT II NOTEWORTHY THAT SYRIANS AND THEIR INTERLOCUTORS ARE APPROACHING CEASEFIRE ISSUE WITH FORETHOUGHT AND CAUTION NOT RPT NOT OBSERVABLE IN THE INNUMERABLE PREVIOUS "CEASEFIRE AGREEMENTS" WHICH HAVE FAILED TO HALT SPIRAL OF VIOLENCE. WE HAVE ONE FAIRLY RELIABLE REPORT WHICH SUGGESSTS THAT FULL PROCESS OF CEASEFIRE AND COMPLETE STANDDOWN OF CONFRONTING FORCES IS ENVISAGED AS TAKING PLACE WITHIN A PERIOD OF FOUR TO SEVEN DAYS FROM JAN 22, ALTHOUGH, OF COURSE, ACTUAL CEASEFIRE WOULD COME INTO EFFECT SOONER.

3. KHADDAM AND CO. HELD THEIR FIRST CONSULTATIONS JAN 22 WITH PRES FRANGIE, WHO WAS SECONDED BY LUCIEN DAHDAH, COL JULES BOUSTANY (G-2) AND GENERALS SAID AND NASRALLAH. ALTHOUGH FEW DETAILS OF MEETING HAVE BEEN RELEASED, WE ARE INFORMED THAT DISCUSSIONS REVOLVED AROUND NEED FOR CEASEFIRE, SYRIAN FORMULA FOR SOLUTION (NOW ALLEGED TO INCLUDE NINE RPT NINE POINTS) AND DESIREABILITY OF POLITICAL AGREEMENT BEFORE RPT BEFORE CEASEFIRE. ACCORDING TO THIS SOURCE, FRANGIE WAS RECEPTIVE TO SYRIAN EFFORTS AND IDEAS AND IT WAS AGREED THAT NEW NATIONAL CHARTER OR AMENDMENT TO ORIGINAL CHARTER OF 1943 SHOULD BE ISSUED, PERHAPS WITHIN NEXT TWO OR THREE DAYS. FRANGIE ALSO AGREED TO REFUSE TO ACCEPT RESIGNATION OF PRIMIN KARAME, AND, MOST SIGNIFICANTLY OF ALL, FRANGIE ALLEGEDLY ACCEPTS SYRIAN UNILATERAL GUARANTEES OF PALESTINIAN BEHAVIOR AS BEING SUFFICIENT BASIS FOR AGREEMENT. TO MANY KNOWLEDGEABLE OBSERVERS, FIRST HINT THAT TALKS WERE PROCEEDING POSITIVELY FROM FRANGIE'S POINT OF VIEW WAS NEWS EVENING JAN 22 THAT GOL HAD REJECTED ARAB LEAGUE CALL FOR SESSION TO CONSIDER LEBANESE CRISIS. PREVIOUSLY, WHENEVER THE SYRIANS BECAME HEAVILY ENGAGED IN ATTEMPTING TO MEDIATE
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IN LEBANON, IT WAS ALMOST PREDICTABLE THAT FRANGIE WOULD PUBLICLY PRAISE EFFORTS AND/OR POSITIONS OF OTHER ARAB STATES. IT APPEARS NOW THAT FRANGIE AT LEAST HAS RECOGNIZED UNIQUE ADVANTAGES OF SYRIA IN BRINGING OFF AGREEMENT AND THAT KHADDAM MADE SOLE RELIANCE UPON SYRIAN MEDIATION A PRE-REQUISITE OF CONTINUING HIS MISSION.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8277

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 0713

4. FOLLOWING HIS TALKS WITH FRANGIE, KHADDAM PROCEEDED MUFTI'S RESIDENCE IN 'AARAMOUN, WHERE HE MET WITH KARAME AND SUNNI MUSLIM NOTABLES. CONFAB WAS SUBSEQUENTLY JOINED BY SHIITE IMAM MUSA AS SADR AND LEFTIST MOUTHPIECE, CUOYFE JUMBLATT. PRIOR TO THEIR ARRIVAL, WE ARE TOLD THAT SAEB SALAM AND OTHERS INSISTED THAT IT IS NECESSARY TO GET JUMBLATT TO SIGN ON THE DOTTED LINE RE ANY ULTIMATE AGREEMENT WHICH HE MAY ACCEPT. DURING THIS SESSION, KHADDAM REPORTEDLY UNVEILED NINE-POINT FORMULA (OTHER SOURCES CITE DIFFERENT NUMBERS OF POINTS BUT CONCUR THAT FIVE IS NO LONGER THE MAGIC NUMBER), WHICH APPEARS TO BE SYRIA'S INITIAL FIVE POINTS WITH MODIFICATIONS INTRODUCED BY FRANGIE ON BEHALF OF CHRISTIANS. IMPORTANT ADDITIONS, AS WE ARE TOLD, INCLUDE RETENTION OF PRESENT ELECTORAL LAWS; DECONFESSIONALIZATION OF CIVIL SERVICE POSITIONS BELOW DIRGEN LEVEL (I.E. EXCEPT FOR QUP TOP POSTS); AND POSSIBLE CREATION OF SECOND HOUSE OR SENATE IN PARLIAMENT WHERE CHRISTIANS WOULD RETAIN SIX-FIVE EDGE. (FRANGIE IS REPORTEDLY WILLING TO WITHDRAW LAST OF THESE DEMANDS IN THE INTEREST OF OVERALL AGREEMENT.) FINALLY, WE ARE INFORMED THAT MARONITE CHRISTIAN HOLD ON PRESIDENCY WOULD BE GUARANTEED AND POSSIBLY ENSHRINED IN CONSTITUTION AS NOD TOWARD CHRISTIAN ANXIETIES. PARTICIPANTS, INCLUDING JUMBLATT, WERE APPARENTLY INCLINED TO ACCEPT THIS FORMULATION, ALTHOUGH JUMBLATT STATED THAT HE MUST CONSULT HIS LEFTIST ALLIES; THEY MET JAN 22 AND ARE SLATED TO MEET AGAIN AT 1200 HOURS JAN 23.

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5. KHADDAM WILL MEET TODAY WITH CAMILLE CHAMOUN AND PIERRE GEMAYEL AND SOME OBSERVERS ARE GOING SO FAR AS TO PREDICT PUBLIC RECONCILIATION BETWEEN CHAMOUN AND SYRIANS. ANNOUNCEMENT THIS MORNING OF CONCRETE PROGRESS APPEARS TO MAKE SUCH UNTHINKABLE EVENT MORE PLAUSIBLE THAN BEFORE, BUT WE INCLINED TO WITHHOLD JUDGMENT TO SEE WHAT ERRATIC CHAMOUN WILL ACTUALLY DO. AS OF JAN 22, OUR INFORMATION INDICATES THAT CHAMOUN WAS STILL AS OBDURATE AS EVER AND WE HAVE ONE REPORT THAT HE CUSSSED MARONITE PATRIARCH KHURAYSH OVER THE PHONE. KHURAYSH WAS CLOSETED AT BKERKE WITH MARONITE AND

OTHER CATHOLIC LEADERS AND WAS UNDER INTENSE PRESSURE FROM CHARBEL KASSIS TO ISSUE STRONGLY CONDEMNATORY STATEMENT AGAINST PALESTINIANS, "COMMUNISTS" ET AL FOR ATROCITIES AT DAMOUR (WE HAVE GOOD INFORMATION THAT SOME WOMEN AND CHILDREN WERE INDEED BUTCHERED THERE). KHURAYSH, WHO FOR ALL HIS MODERATION IS A RATHER WEAK REED, DID FINALLY MAKE SUCH STATEMENT; BUT, CONTRARY TO FEARS EXPRESSED IN SOME CIRCLES, THIS ACT DID NOT RPT NOT DERAILED SYRIAN INITIATIVE. KHURAYSH ALSO ISSUED SOMEWHAT VAGUE APPEAL TO POPE TO USE HIS INFLUENCE TO STOP SLAUGHTER IN LEBANON.

6. ARRIVAL OF LARGE NUMBERS OF CHRISTIAN REFUGEES AT JOUNIEH HAS HAD EFFECT OF DAMPENING ENTHUSIASM AND HEIGHTENING FEARS OF CHRISTIANS IN MOUNT LEBANON AND MAY BE FACTOR IN THEIR INCREASING WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER SYRIAN APPROACH MORE POSITIVELY. FURTHER INDICATION OF CHRISTIAN RETICENCE IS FACT THAT ANTICIPATED ASSAULT ON NABAA SECTION HAS NOT RPT NOT DEVELOPED AND RELIABLE INFORMATION REACHING US IS THAT PHALANGE AND CHAMOUNISTS HOLDING THEIR HAND THERE TO AWAIT OUTCOME OF SYRIAN-GENERATED NEGOTIATIONS. CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AT PRESENT APPEARS DELICATELY BALANCED BETWEEN MASSADA COMPLEX AND RECOGNITION OF THE NEED TO END CONFLICT.

7. SYRIAN EFFORTS HAVE NOT CONCENTRATED URVHN INTRA-LEBANESE ASPECTS OF CRISIS TO EXCLUSION OF PALESTINIAN ISSUE. KHADDAM AND COLEAGUES MET JAN 22 WITH 'ARAFAT AND OTHER PLO LUMINARIES AT HOME OF ZUHAIR MOHSEN. CURRENT INFORMATION IS THAT SYRIAN PLAN REVOLVED AROUND FOURTEEN POINTS DRAWN FROM CAIRO AGREEMENT AND MELKART PROTOCOL WHICH WOULD DEFINE PERMISSABLE LIMITS OF

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PALESTINIAN ACTIVITIES IN LEBANON. ALTHOUGH THIS PROCEDURE HAS THE QUALITY AND DRAMA OF ATTEMPTING TO STUFF THE GENIE BACK INTO THE LAMP, 'ARAFAT AND HIS COLLEAGUES ARE APPARENTLY WILLING TO PROCEED ON THIS BASIS AT THIS CRITICAL JUNCTURE IN THEIR LEBANESE EXPERIENCE. 'ARAFAT HAS FORMED A THREE-MAN COMMITTEE INCLUDING ABU IYAD (SALAH KHALAF OF FATAH) AND MOHSEN (SA'IQA) TO STUDY AND COOPERATE IN IMPLEMENTING PLANS FOR AN END TO THE FIGHTING.

8. DESPITE THE HECTIC PACT OF SYRIAN ACTIVITIES, SITUATION ON GROUND IN COUNTRY LITTLE CHANGED THUS FAR. CLASHES CONTINUE IN MANY PARTS OF BEIRUT, BUT NEIGHBORHOODS IN IMMEDIATE VICINITY OF EMBASSY REASONABLY CLEAR OF ACTUAL FIGHTING. OVERNIGHT, THERE WERE SEVERAL ATTACKS ON INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES AND ARMY INSTALLATIONS IN BEIRUT, INCLUDING GENDARMERIE BARRACKS ON VERDUN STREET. ASSAULT ON BEIRUT MILITARY DISTRICT C7OF ARMY (NEAR MUSEUM) WAS BEATEN OFF

LAST NIGHT WITH LOSSES AMONG BOTH DEFENDERS AND ATTACKERS. ON DAMASCUS ROAD, ARMY HAS TAKEN UP POSITION JUST ABOVE CHTAURA. AMERICAN NEWSMMEN WHO WERE IN CHTAURA JAN 21 (AFTER ARMY WITHDRAWAL) REPORT SEEING ARMED MEN FROM FATAH AND PARTI POPULAIRE SYRIAN (PPS) BUT NOT RPT NOT PALESTINE LIBERATION ARMY (PLA). OCCUPIERS HAVE NOT THUS FAR SHOWNDISPOSITION TO PUSH BEYOND CHTAURA. HEAVY FIGHTING HAS APPARENTLY BEEN OCCURRING AROUND FRANGIE'S

HOMETOWN OF ZGHORTA AND WE UNDERSTAND MAIN ATTACKS NOW COMING FROM EAST OF TOWN. IN THE AKKAR, TOWN OF QUBAYAT ALONE REMAINS IN CHRISTIAN HANDS AND ZAHLE CONTINUES TO BE SHELLED. SCATTERED REPORTS FROM THE SOUTH INDICATE CONTINUING ATTACKS AGAINST GOVERNMENT POSTS AND INSTALLATIONS.

9. GENERAL LAWLESSNESS CONTINUES TO AFFLICT RAS BEIRUT AND OTHER AREAS WHERE THERE IS NO RPT NO FIGHTING. THREE OFFICERS OF BRITISH EMBASSY WERE ROBBED JAN 22 IN BROAD DAYLIGHT ALONG CORNICHE AND BRITISH HAVE CONTACTED BOTH LOCAL DRUZE (WHO HAVE STEPPED UP PROTECTIVE PATROLS) AND PALESTINIANS. FLYING ROADBLOCKS ARE STILL THE ORDER OF THE DAY IN RAOUCHE AND, OCCASIONALLY, EVEN CLOSER TO EMBASSY, BUT ALL AMCITS REMAIN SAFE TO BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE.

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10. FRENCH-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER "L'ORIENT" ESTIMATES THAT FIGHTING HAS CREATED 10,000 REFUGEES IN THE DAMOUR AREA AND 2,000 IN THE QARANTINA AREA. FOOD SHORTAGES ARE BECOMING MORE ACUTE. RICE, FLOUR AND SUGAR ARE VIRTUALLY NOT AVAILABLE. LOOTING OF FOOD STORES CONTINUES AT HIGH PACE, WITH LOOTERS USING REFUGEES AS JUSTIFICATION FOR THEIR ACT. BAKERIES THAT HAVE FLOUR REPORTEDLY ARE BARTERING BREAD FOR FUEL FOR THEIR OVENS. GOVERNMENT HAS ANNOUNCED PLANS TO DISTRIBUTE UNDER ARMED ESCORT A HUNDRED TONS OF FLOUR OBTAINED FROM SYRIA.

11. POL PRODUCTS ARE VIRTUALLY NON-EXISTENT IN V IN RAS BEIRUT AREA. GOVERNMENT HAS DEVISED SCHEME TO HAVE TANKER DISCHARGE GAS/OIL TO ARMY BARGE WHICH WILL DOCK NEAR CORAL BEACH HOTEL AND FILL TANK TRUCKS. FIRST PRIORITY OF RESUPPLY IS AUH. ALTHOUGH SCHEME SHOWS INGENUITY WITH WHICH MANY LEBANESE HAVE APPROACHED COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, EXPERTS BELIEVE TECHNICAL PROBLEMS MAY PREVENT PLAN'S EXECUTION AND FEAR RIOTS IN THE DISCHARGING AREA. NEITHER OF TWO GENERATING PLANTS SUPPLYING ELECTRICITY TO BEIRUT AREA HAVE RECEIVED RESUPPLIES OF FUEL, AND ELECTRICITY WITH OCCASIONAL OUTTAGES IS BEING MAINLY SUPPLIED FROM HYDRO-ELECTRIC PLANTS.
LAMBRAKIS

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